AN ELEGY

On the death of

Mr. *JAMES BRISTOW*,
Late Fellow of All-souls,

Immodicis brevis est ætas, & rara senectus
Mart.

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by Edw. Palmer

OXFORD,
Printed by *W. H.* for *Fran. Oxlad*,
Jun. 1667

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TO THE MEMORY

Of that most Ingenious Gentleman,

Mr. *JAMES BRISTOW*,

Late Fellow of All-souls;

His most Deservedly Admired

Friend.

O H! never tell me then *again*,
That Death *before* did ever Tyrannize,
Though *Thousands* lately fell her Prize;
You doe perswade in vain;
This year she greater Power Shows,
Though fewer *feel*, more *curse* her Blows:
This year fell *Cowly*, and this year *He* fell,
Who of us all that in *Parnassus* dwell,
Next claim'd as due *Apollo*'s Lawrell Crown,
Alwayes on *Wit* Entayl'd, though not o'th *Gown*.
Death when it struck those two, did more
Then the Devouring *Plague* before.
It is the *Worth*, not *Number* of the Dead,
Which proves Fate *Cruell* and *Unlimited*.
Thus some who all their baser Captives spare,
That are not worth a *Victors* Care,
If by their hands the Noble *Leaders* dye,
Think they by this *out-doe* their *Victory*,
And thus more honour gain,
Then if the *Conquer'd Army* they had slain.

2.

We knew that *Goodness*, and we knew that *Wit*
Must soonest to Deaths laws submit;
But Oh! we never thought that *Fate*
Should prove more hard to *You*,
And shew a greater hate,
Then heretofore to *Wit* she us'd to doe.
To *Cowley* kinder *Stars* did yeild,
That he his *Monument* might build;
VVhich he, like some who still suspicious are
Of their *Successors* love and care,
For his own self, with his *Immortall* hand did rear.
But *Thee* death unawares surpriz'd,
Else she had never Excercil'd
Over thy *Wit* her *Cruelty*,
And *doubly* had rob'd us of *Thee*:
Thy Off-spring might have dar'd her Tyranny.

3.

VVhen to a Merchant, and his goods some wave,
As greedy as himselfe, affords a grave;
(His Gold as low in water being hid,
As in its *Mother Earth* when buried)
His friends may justly grieve thus *doubly* Crost;
Having both *Him*, and all his treasures lost.
As justly thus grieve we,
Thus *double* is our Misery,
Not onely that we have lost you,
But your great *thoughts*, that Richest Treasure too.
Ah Cruell death, that *Legacie*

His Friends claim'd as their due.
Had he but left the picture of his minde,
VVe had not thought thee death unkind.
A *Cunning Coward* thou wert sure;
Thou cam'st not fairly on, nor warning gave,
Else he had never fear'd the grave:
He by his *Pen* had been secure.
Mark Antony could *Tully* never kill,
And *Seneca* lives yet, in *spight* of *Nero's* will.

4.

Tell me, ye *Fatall Sisters*, do you not
Lament *Your selves* when such must dye;
VVhen VVit and Folly must together lye,
And have one Common lot?
Methinks some *Palsie* Head, some *Piece* of Man,
Who hath *outliv'd* himselfe beyond his span;
One halfe of whom was buried long a goe,
Whose living Part is rotten too,
Who to some Courteous Joyner Owes,
For *Arms*, and *Hands*, and *Legs*, and *Toes*,
Might you (dire Sisters) very well Suffice,
There you with little Pains might Kill, & Tyrannize;
But if your Envy fly at *Wit*,
You might your Cruelty Commit
On One who once professed it;
But did his *Vein* long since *outlive*,
To whom the Muses once a flame did give,
But now the *Man* the *Poet* doth survive?
Thus *decay'd Wit* might please you, & you might,
with those rich *remnants*, & *brave Reliques* glut your spight.

5.

Tell me, you Cruell *Stars*, why you
Did thus *Conſent* unto his fall?
He from your *Phœbus* own'd his Call,
And from him he had his *light* too.
And how could you (bright Sun) thus Cruell be
To your own Votary?
But how alas I talk in Vain!
Oh! how do I profaine!
As if That God which once did him Inſpire
With his kind heat, ſhould *kill* him with his fire.
But if you did, great *Phœbus*, you did know
So brave, So rich a Soul
Was never ſent to be on Earth confin'd,
Or to be pent up here below.
Great Souls, like the *Pellæan Youth*, lye here
Panting on Earth, Impriſon'd, & want Air;
From which by death when freed, then firſt they riſe
From their own *graves*, and then *begin* their Lives.
Thus have the kinder *Stars* him *ſav'd* by Death,
And *damn'd* us here below to draw our breath.

6.

Thus now at once the Heavens we know
May Cruelty and kindneſs ſhow.
We from his Joyes Our greater ſorrows date,
His Death was only unto us a *Fate*.
But when all loſe, why thus grieve I alone?
Now all *Parnaſſus* ſhould weep Elegies.
VVith him lyes buried a Philoſopher,

VVith

VVith him a *Poet* and an *Orator*;
VVe have loſt Three in One.
Aud what in youth or Age was found,
VVas in that *Narrow Compaſs* bound.
Few years alaſs! (too few) he told,
And yet in all things, but *years* Old.
His learned Muſe was ſoft, and ſmooth, and high,
VVhich had he publiſh'd (as all now adayes)
Beſt Poets might reſign their Bayes.
But Oh! his Modeſty did this deny;
And yet he was not leſs, becauſe leſs known;
As *Stars* which our *Horizon* never light,
Their dazling beauty is to Others ſhown,
And ſhine as fair, though hid from our unhappy ſight.

7.

But Since th' art gone, would I too might retire,
My ſelfe I ſtrangely alter'd ſee;
VVhom once I did but ſilently admire
(For more my Envy did deny)
I now confeſs he will my Idol be;
O ſure I 'm much too vaine,
(As Heathens Once) to worſhip *Man* againe:
But yet in this I give thee more thy due,
Then when the *Wit* I ſaw, I never prais'd in *you*.
Oh! then, (*dear Saint*) I beg it at thy *Shrine*,
Forgive (for now thou art Divine)
Forgive, I ſay, that once he Envy'd Thee,
(And who would not thy *Poetry*?)
VVho now in Verſe this pious Tribute payes,
And now at laſt does ſpeak thy Praiſe.
But yet what do I doe?

I wrong'd Thee then, and now I wrong Thee too;
As if Poor I, thy worth could e're reherse,
A Theme for one who only writes like you,
A Theme for some Immortall Verse.
Thus some dull Lover, who long dumb hath bin,
But can not so his Mistris win,
Ventures at length to Rhyme upon her Name,
Thinking poor Fool he sings her fame;
His meaning's good, yet she more angry growes,
He his own *folly* thus, not her *Wit* showes.

8.

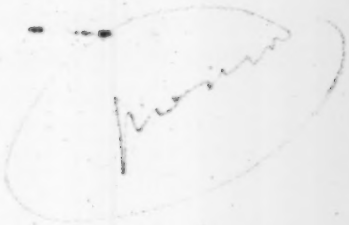
Then All you VVits that In *Elizium* dwell,
All you that Tragick Stories tell;
All you of learned Greece, and you
Of *Rome* as Learned too,
I Summon now to meet at this great Herse,
The Noblest *Subject* for your Verse.
Let *Sophocles* his *Buskins* there put on;
Let *Seneca* too thither Come;
There with your *Moving Accents* sing his fame,
And in the doleful'st Tones repeat his Name:
You need not make new Elegies; sing o're
What you of VVorthies sung before:
In no new Tune you need complain,
For they in Him do but dye o're again.
Make us too, sensible of our great losse,
VVho are distracted with so great a Crosse.
Great blowes are not soon felt, for we
As yet weigh not our Misery.
First make us understand his VVorth that's gone,
Then with your charming Rhet'rick teach us how to moan.

9.

Unhappy Chance! I thought to say no more,
And *Looks* should speak, what did my *Tongue* before.
But Oh! me thoughts I saw him disappear:
His weeping Friends surpriz'd with griefe and fear;
Thus, the poor *Persians*, when their Sun's to set
In watry *Tethys* lap, with Eyes as VVet,
As is his bed, sadly resent his fall,
Expecting now his Funerall.
'Tis Strange! so *Vnconcern'd* he was, so *glad*
To part with breath, his freinds so *sad*
To part with him; so much they *grieve*,
As if They were to *Dye*, and He to *Live*;
He Checks their griefe, at once *severe* & *kind*,
For Death could not debase his *Gen'rous* mind.
So dyeing *Cato* look'd when He
In *Plato* found his *Immortality*.
Then too methoughts I heard his dyeing words,
Compos'd of all that Eloquence affords;
You would have thought (as *Condemn'd* Men,
VVho at their *Exit* begge a *Plaudite*)
He *made* them long agoe, but *spoke* them then,
And yet alass! for all this He must *dye*.

10.

Now thou, Unhappy *Colledge*, guard his Dust,
Happy in that thou hast that Trust.
And when you speak of *Digges*, remember then
In *This* great Soul, you have lost him again.
And here I charge you all before the *Nine*,
As you will answer for your Crime
Before *Apollo*, that if any have
His Verse, they would not too give *That* a grave.

For happy we shall be (*great Soul*) when You
Returne more known, and yet less Envi'd too.
Then let none dare to Rob the Publick so,
That he to all his Freinds doth owe.
Therefore who shall such Felony Commit,
Shall be Arraign'd for *That*, and *False imprison'd* VVit.

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